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BOROUGH OF SOUTH MOLTON

Annual Report

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health

FOR THE

Year ended December 31st, 1950

MINISTRY OF HEALTH
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F. J. H. MARTIN,
M.R.C.S. (Eng.), L.R.C.P. (Lond.), D.P.H. (Oxon.),
Medical Officer of Health.

S. W. LUDDON, PRINTER, SOUTH MOLTON.

113, East Street,
South Molton,
June, 1951.

To His Worship the Mayor, Aldermen and
Councillors of the Borough of South Molton.

Mr. Mayor and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to present the Annual Report on the Health and Sanitary Administration of the Borough for the year 1950.

Your obedient Servant,

F. J. H. MARTIN,
M.R.C.S. (Eng.), L.R.C.P. (Lond.), D.P.H. (Oxon).
Medical Officer of Health.

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South Molton Borough.

LIST OF STAFF.

The Staff of the Public Health Department consists of :—

Part-time Officers :—

F. J. H. MARTIN,
M.R.C.S. (Eng.) L.R.C.P. (Lond.), D.P.H. (Oxon),
Medical Officer of Health.

Mrs. ELWORTHY, Clerk.

Whole-time Officer :—

H. SETTLE, M.I.Mun.E., M.I.H.E., M.S.I.A., C.R.S.I.
Sanitary Inspector.

Statistics and Social Conditions of the Area.

Area in acres	5,910
Population	3,065
Inhabited Houses	990
Rateable Value	£15,778
Sum represented by a penny rate	£62

Vital Statistics.

		Males	Females	Total
LIVE BIRTHS—Legitimate	...	27	24	51
Illegitimate	...	0	2	2
				53

Rate per 1,000 population 17·2

		Males	Females	Total
STILL BIRTHS—Legitimate	...	1	0	1
Illegitimate	...	1	0	1
				2

Rate per 1,000 total Live and Still Births 17·9

	Males	Females	Total
DEATHS	29	27	56

Death rate per 1,000 population 18·2

Deaths from Puerperal Causes.

Puerperal Sepsis	0
Other Puerperal Causes	0

Below I append a Table that shows the comparative figures South Molton Borough and England and Wales.

The total Birth Rate and the total Death Rate are shown corrected by the area comparability factors.

The local Death Rate is shown corrected by the areal comparability factor

Rate per 1,000 population.			Death Rate per 1,000	Infant Mortality Rate per 1,000 live births	
	Live Births	Still Births		Deaths under 1 year	Deaths from Diarrhœo and Enteritis under 2 years
South Molton Borough	20·4	·65	13·5	37·7	0
England and Wales ...	15·8	·37	11·6	29·8	1·9

Deaths of Infants under 1 year.

	Males	Females	Total
Legitimate	1	1	2
Illegitimate	0	0	0
			2

Rate per 1,000 Live Births 37·7

Deaths from Measles (all ages)	0
Deaths from Whooping Cough (all ages)	0
Deaths from Diarrhœa (under 2 years of age) ...	0

Causes of Death during the year 1950

	Males	Females
Respiratory Tuberculosis	0	1
Malignant and Symphatic Neoplaseus ...	3	3
Diabetes	0	1
Vascular Lesions of Nervous System ...	2	4
Coronary Disease	3	3
Hypertension with Heart Disease	1	1
Other Heart Disease	8	8
Other Circulatory Diseases	2	1
Pneumonia	1	0
Bronchitis	3	2
Ulcer of Stomach and Duodenum	1	0
Congenital Malformation	0	1
Other defined and ill defined Diseases ...	4	2
Motor Vehicle Accident	1	0
	29	27

Cases of Infectious Diseases notified in 1950

AGE Years		MEASLES M	MEASLES F	WHOOPING COUGH M	WHOOPING COUGH F
0-1	...	—	—	—	—
1-2	...	—	—	—	—
2-3	...	—	—	—	—
3-4	...	—	—	1	1
4-5	...	—	—	1	—
5-10	...	1	—	—	2
10-15	...	—	—	—	—
15-25	...	—	—	—	—
20-25	...	—	—	—	—
25-30	...	—	—	—	—
TOTALS	...	1	—	2	3

Tuberculosis.

There were no new cases of Tuberculosis during 1950.
There was one death from Pulmonary Tuberculosis during 1950

Acute Polio Myolitis.

No cases were notified during the year.

General Provisions of Health Services in the Area.

HOSPITALS.

1. TUBERCULOSIS.

Hawley Sanitorium situated in the Borough of Barnstaple, has 29 beds.

2. MATERNITY CARE.

The Devon County Council is continuing to act as they did in 1949 as agents of the Regional Hospital Board, until the Board has completed its own plans for the treatment of Maternity Cases.

The South Molton and District Cottage Hospital continues to function under the North Devon Hospital Group, and deals with a certain number of Maternity cases.

There is also a Ward of 15 beds, with a fully qualified staff, at the North Devon Infirmary, Barnstaple, available for maternity cases of doubt and difficulty.

During the coming year a General Practitioners Maternity Unit of 13 beds will be opened at "Highfield", Victoria Road, Barnstaple.

3. ISOLATION OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

Cases are sent to the Bideford Isolation Hospital, which is situated just outside the Borough of Bideford. It is of recent construction and well equipped in every way for the treatment of Infectious Diseases. It comprises 34 beds (6 of which are in observation cubicles) and 4 cots.

4. SMALL POX.

The Small Pox Hospital to which cases of Small Pox will be sent is at Upton Pine. Telephone to Isolation Hospital, Whipton Exeter 67158 and this is the same number for the Ambulance.

5. GENERAL.

The South Molton and District Cottage Hospital situated in the Borough serves the area. There are 10 beds for General and Maternity cases.

The North Devon Infirmary situated in Barnstaple, also serves the area, and provides modern medical and surgical treatment.

In South Molton there are 29 beds available at Beech House for the Chronic Sick.

A Blood Bank has been established at the North Devon Infirmary.

6. CLINICS AND TREATMENT CENTRES.

V.D. Clinic.—This is held at the Annex of the North Devon Infirmary, Barnstaple.

SESSIONS.

Mondays	-	4.0 p.m.	5.15 p.m,
Thursdays	-	4.30 p.m.	5.45 p.m.

CHEST CLINIC held at North Devon Infirmary.

Tuesdays	-	9.0 a.m. - 1.0 p.m.		Clinic and X-Ray Examinations
		2.0 p.m. - 4.0 p.m.		
Thursdays	-	9.0 a.m. - 1.0 p.m.		
		2.0 p.m. - 4.0 p.m.		
Fridays	-	9.0 a.m. - 1.0 p.m.		A.P. refills.
		2.0 p.m. - 4.0 p.m.		

7. PROFESSIONAL NURSING IN THE HOMES.

There is a District Nurse living and practising in the Borough, she is also a Midwife, in addition there is a private practising Midwife living in the Borough.

8. LABORATORY FACILITIES.

The Laboratory is situated at 7, Dix's Field, Exeter, and is in charge of Dr. Moore. It is completely installed with the necessary equipment for bacteriological examinations of all kinds. Its Diagnostic and Consultative Services are available for all patients, and it undertakes the analysis of Drinking Water and Milk.

This Service is extremely valuable and is widely used by the Medical Practitioners in your District.

In the near future a new Pathological Laboratory will be available at the former North Devon Dispensary in Boutport Street, Barnstaple to serve the needs of the North Devon Area.

9. IMMUNIZATION AGAINST DIPHTHERIA.

38 children received a course of primary injections and 52 received a reinforcing injection.

10. VACCINATION.

24 children were vaccinated during the year.

11. "HOME HELP" SCHEME.

Run by the W.V.S. for the Devon County Council, covers all Barnstaple and Rural Areas wherever transport is available.

There are 24 "Home Helps" in Barnstaple, and 169 cases have been dealt with in 1950.

Any case recommended by a Doctor, Health Visitor, or District Nurse is entitled to a " Home Help."

The " Home Helps " do any work in the home normally done by the housewife.

Six cases are being dealt with at the moment in looking after old people living by themselves who otherwise would have to go to a hospital.

The Barnstaple branch will cover both South Molton Borough and Rural Areas, but it is hoped that a "Home Help" scheme will be started in South Molton during 1951.

12. AMBULANCE SERVICE.

Under Section 27 of the National Health Service Act, 1946, the Local Health Authority (*i.e.* the Devon County Council) is responsible for the provision of an Ambulance Service, and the Devon County Health Committee have arranged for this to be provided through the Agency of the St. John Ambulance Association. Under the scheme, an Ambulance Station has been established at South Molton. The District served is South Molton and South Molton Rural District. The Hospital Car Service also under the Devon County Council is available upon application to Hospitals and the Ambulance Service is empowered to hire cars in urgent cases when the Ambulance is not necessary.

Water Supply.

The supply is obtained from the gathering grounds on the foothills of Exmoor, and is impounded in the Holywell Reservoir which contains approximately 7,000,000 gallons. It is piped therefrom to the Filter House at Westland Bridge and is passed through three "Candy" Pressure Filters and thence by trunk main of 6" diameter to the Service Reservoirs at North Road, South Molton, the Service Reservoirs being two in number and containing 340,000 gallons; the water is then distributed through the town mains of varying diameters. The water is analysed at regular intervals and the Analyst's Reports are still very satisfactory, the general description being that the water "is of a high degree of chemical and bacterial purity" I am pleased to again report that I find that the Filters and the water supply system generally are maintained in a highly efficient manner by your Waterworks Foreman Mr. Warne. The Chlorination Plant will be in operation in a few weeks The Filters are in good order and one of the North Road Reservoirs has been emptied and thoroughly cleaned. New distribution mains have been laid in North Road, Exeter Gate Estate and the Georgenympton Road and the North Street main will be in hand shortly.

Holywell Reservoir Dam.

The Consulting Engineers are still preparing Plans and Contract for raising the Dam of the Reservoir and it is hoped that the work will commence in the Autumn of this year.

Sewage Disposal.

The existing Sewage Disposal plants at Mole Bridge, Cooks Cross and West End Terrace are still incapable of properly treating the Sewage and as reported previously there does not appear to be any way of improving the effluent except at considerable cost which in view of the new sewerage scheme would be a waste of public money. Tenders are now being called for in respect of the first part of the new scheme and a starting date for construction has been fixed for March 1st next by the Ministry of Health.

Housing.

5 Traditional Houses were erected and tenanted during the year.

14 Traditional Houses are in the course of erection and will be completed early in 1951.

1 Private Bungalow is in the course of erection and will be completed early in 1951.

2 Buildings have been converted into Dwelling Houses.

72 Houses have been erected by the Borough since the end of the War, 14 houses are in the course of erection, and a further 12 houses are being planned, the lay-out plans for the latter have already received the approval of the Regional Architect. For a Town of the size of South Molton, housing progress has been very satisfactory indeed.

Plans.

40 Plans for new buildings, extensions etc., have been dealt with under Planning and Bye-Laws during the Year.

Sanitation.

Number of Houses inspected	35
Number of Preliminary Notices served under Public Health Acts	6
Number of Statutory Notices served under Public Health Acts	2

The chief defects that have been dealt with are :—

Roof repairs and made watertight.
Stoves and cooking apparatus renewed.
Lavatory Pans renewed.
Drains cleared.
General Repairs to Walls and Ceilings.
Floors renewed.
Improvement of Water Supplies.

Refuse Collection and Disposal.

Domestic refuse is collected regularly in the built-up areas of the Borough and monthly collections are now being made at outlying Farms and Hamlets. Refuse is carted to the dump at Hacche Road. The dump is regularly treated for the destruction of Rodents.

Rats and Mice (Destruction) Act, 1919, and Orders.

The following methods for the destruction of Rats and Mice are taken :— The Refuse Tip at Hacche Road, the Sewage Outfall Tanks at Mole Bridge and West End Terrace are periodically treated by pre baiting and then with poisoned baits and the results are satisfactory. A number of private houses and business premises have been visited on receipt of complaints, and disinfestation has been carried out.

Inspection of Meat and other Foods.

Meat supplies have been regularly inspected on arrival at the Pannier Market, and all unsound meat has been seized and destroyed or returned to Barnstaple, after consultation with the Authorities at Barnstaple. The method of transporting and general handling of the meat is, however, not entirely satisfactory but some improvement has been made since the last report.

Foods Condemned as Unfit for Human Consumption.

Wet Fish	8 stones
Carcase Meat	134 lbs.
Tinned Fish	18 Tins
Tinned Milk	49 Tins
Tinned Fruit	79 Tins
Tinned Vegetables ...	38 Tins
Tinned Meat	52 Tins.
French Cheeses	120

Ice Cream.

All the premises in which Ice Cream is made have been inspected regularly, and we are pleased to report that generally the conditions are satisfactory, and we find that retailers are very willing to accept our advice and to make such improvements in premises and methods of handling we may from time to time request. Sampling has now been delegated to the local Authority.

Factories and Workshops.

Factories and Workshops are inspected periodically and are found to be kept as required by the Factory Act. Some improvements have been carried out.

Factories in which Sections 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 ars enforced by the Borough :—

Number on Register	14
Number of Inspections	22
Notices Served	3

Factories in which Section 7 is enforced by the Borough :—

Number on Register	24
Number of Inspections	26
Notices Served	nil

Cases in which defects were found :—

Want of Cleanliness—Found	2
,, ,, Remedied ...	2

Bakehouses.

Bakehouses are inspected periodically, and they are generally found to be in good order.

I desire to thank the Town Clerk and Mr. Settle for their valuable help to me.

F. J. H. MARTIN.